

MEMORIES - DOROTHY (MATZ) MALMQUIST - 1999

(My memories may not be the same as those of my sisters and brothers or my children.)

I was born just after midnight, the eldest of seven children born to William and Mary (Erwin) Matz on December 21, 1917 in a little farm house in St. Mary's Township, Waseca County, just about 1/4 mile from Grandma and Grandpa Matz's farm. Grandma Louisa Erwin was the midwife and the doctor (they made house calls in those days) was either Dr. McIntyre or Dr. Blanchard. Grandma allowed Mom up from bed to eat Christmas dinner with the family. The average confinement in bed was seven to ten days in those days. Needless to say, I don't have any memories of that time.

My next clear memories are when I was three or four years old. I remember standing on the bank of a creek that ran through our back yard and throwing a little necklace as hard as I could across the creek (I was mad at my mother). The necklace was important to my mother because Aunt Katie Morehouse, her good friend and former Sunday school teacher, had sent it to me from Connecticut. Mom spent hours trying to find it but never did. At this time too, I remember biting Ted in the seat and getting a spanking for it. Ted got a cookie. I must have been a brat! I also remember sitting on the drainboard of the sink in the kitchen and getting my feet washed. We always ran barefoot in the summer.

My next memories are from the Breen place where Marian was born. I don't remember her as a baby except when we were dressing to go away. She had a pretty white knit cap that someone (probably Grandma Matz) gave her.

The well was downhill from the house and for some reason I took off my shoes and stockings and ran through the snow down there and were my feet cold when I got back! I remember making the ABC's from lath while sitting in the sun on the house banking.

Our cream separator was on the back porch and the "slop cart" was always beside the porch so they poured the skim milk over some ground food for the pigs. Ted crawled up on the high wheel of the cart, leaned over and lost his balance, and went head first into the sour milk and feed. He came up spitting and spluttering but was OK by the time I had sense enough to get Mom for help.

One old sow had little pigs and I hung over the fence watching them, which didn't please the mother. She took after me. Believe me, I broke some speed records getting up to the porch where Mom and Grandma were sitting. Another rumor was that I liked to drink the milk with the little pigs - this rumor I'm sure is entirely unfounded.

Aunt Sadie and Uncle Albert came to visit us all the way from Minneapolis on the train - Uncle Albert and Aunt Sadie and

Gladys, Helen and Stella. I have a picture of them in the buggy ready to go back to the depot. Since they lived so far away we seldom saw them and my mother was really thrilled to have them come.

At Christmas time we had to put all our toys away so Santa would know we took good care of them. He left me a pretty doll with a china head and sleeping eyes which I put up on a table where the little kids wouldn't get it. Ted crawled up and threw my doll on the floor, breaking the head.

From there we moved to a farm near Elysian, Minnesota. There was a big house - at least I remember it as big. But I do remember the barn. It had a high middle section with lean-tos on either side. They could drive in with a load of hay and drive out the other end. It was a wonderful place to play on rainy days.

We sometimes took a blanket to the pasture under the small grove of oak trees - acorns make wonderful play dishes. We often played with the Halley kids who lived just across the road.

Cars were just beginning to be quite common. The road home went beside a lake. Mom was coming home from town with the horses when a car came along and scared the horses. They ran away, dragging the buggy which upset into the ditch but not quite into the lake. Mom wasn't hurt but the buggy had a few things broken.

At Christmas time there was a free movie for kids in town. We had never been to a movie before. All I can clearly remember about it was a train coming right at us from the screen. I was terrified.

Here, too, I was sent over to Halley's to play one afternoon - unheard of - and when they came and got us we had a new brother at home - Vince.

I started school that fall but I don't remember my first day of school. I walked about a mile with the Halley kids. One day we got to school early before the teacher. The big boys opened one of the windows in the back and helped us in, with a warning not to touch the biggest boy's clothes, as he had lice. I didn't know what lice were, but I found out! Mom put kerosene on our heads and combed our hair with a sharp fine toothed comb, bent over a newspaper spread on the table to catch the dead pests.

At about this time Mom's only sister got married. The wedding was at Uncle Carl and Aunt Hilda's in the evening, and for me was a very solemn occasion, dressed in my best and warned to "behave" myself. Aunt Ruth married a widower, Uncle Ernest Fischer who had three children - Warren who was Ted's age, Fanchon a year older than I, and Wilbur, probably six or seven years older.

In the fall Dad worked at a neighbor's sorghum mill. I don't know what he did but he brought home two big five-gallon wooden pails of sorghum for our winter use. Sorghum is thinner and lighter than molasses and we used it on our bread, pancakes, etc.

Here too, Mom was entertaining some ladies, probably Ladies' Aid or something like it. She made chicken salad in lettuce cups

on her big platter - they were so pretty - and put her good serving dishes on the little kitchen table which had leaves on either side that let down. Ted crawled under the table and let down a leaf and many of Mom's good dishes were broken. Ted rated a spanking for that.

I remember Mom opening a dresser drawer and a little mouse jumping out and really startling me. They still do, though I'm not afraid of them.

Our next move was to a farm about five miles southwest (I think) of Waseca known by us as the Krassin place. Ted and I walked about 1/2 mile down our driveway to the "Papke" school. Ted was really small and the big boys liked to hide him behind their big open geography books while the teacher tried to locate him. Our teacher was Jeanette Wyman. During the morning recess we had to take turns (two of us) going down to the Papke place to get a pail of water for the fountain. We were lucky to get back with a half pailful. After the noon hour, Miss Wyman would read aloud a chapter from a book. Ted wasn't interested in the book so he amused himself by counting the buttons down the front of her dress.

On the last day of school we had a picnic - walked down the road to a woods. Someone stopped and offered us a ride in his car. Marian was along as a guest to the picnic. She refused to get in the car (we still drove a horse and buggy) so I had to take her home and missed the picnic.

One of the big boys, Walter Mackey, kind of adopted me and always helped me with my overshoes, coat, scarf and mittens. Later he married a second cousin, Ruth Fell.

One afternoon Mom came to the school and took Ted and me out to go over to Uncle Carl's to "hear" President Coolidge's inaugural address "live" for the first time. Uncle Carl had a big Atwater Kent radio with a big horn speaker and headphones. We had to take turns with the headphones. Neither Ted nor I were so impressed with the speech, so Mom and Uncle Carl did most of the listening. A big historical landmark for them! Ted also developed a case of nine o'clock sickness which Mom cured with a dose of castor oil and bringing him to school late when the "sickness" wore off. It didn't bother him after that.

Mom hadn't been feeling well (probably too much hard work) so went to the doctor - enough to scare us. When she came home she said she had a heart murmur. I put in some anxious days. I fully expected her to have a heart attack and die. By fall, I had gotten used to the idea and wasn't so panic-stricken.

While Ted seemed to get into a lot of trouble, it was Marian this time. She was riding on the drill with Dad and stuck her finger in the drill and it was almost cut off. A hurried trip to the doctor, who sewed it back on and today she can't tell which finger it was. She also was riding down the hill in the little wagon with a stick in her mouth when she turned too sharp and upset, cutting the roof of her mouth. Another trip to the doctor!

Dad got kicked in the hip by a horse and all the rest of his life limped from it. In later years an x-ray revealed that

the leg had been knocked out of the socket and had worn a new dry socket in the bone, causing the pain.

That summer the Fischer kids spent quite a lot of time with us. Wilbur was old enough and big enough to help Dad with the chores and light field work. The fences were very poor in this place and the cows didn't stay in the pasture so Ted, Marian and I had to herd them every day. Warren got in on this too. We alternated turns spending the day in the pasture which got boring so we climbed the hay stacks and slid down them. Dad didn't approve of this.

We knew where there was a prairie chicken nest which we watched to see the little ones hatch. They are seldom seen anymore.

Gene and Vera Erwin stayed with us that summer. I don't know, but maybe Gene worked for Dad. Vera made lots of flannel baby clothes which I thought were for our baby Jim, but when they left she packed them in a suitcase and took them with her. Soon after, their Florence was born.

At threshing time, six or seven neighbors helped each other out. Cooking for threshers, probably about 12 hungry men, was a big deal. Each wife wanted her dinner to be as good as or better than her neighbors'. First there was forenoon lunch - about 10 o'clock taken out to the field - coffee, sandwiches and cake or cookies. Then the big dinner. The men washed the dust from their faces in tin wash basins set on a bench outside the door. After a big dinner and dishes, the cooks started preparing for the three o'clock afternoon lunch, again in the field. Mostly the men went home as soon as the dew began to fall as the straw had to be dry for the thresher to be efficient, so there was only the family for supper and the evening chores - milking, feeding the livestock, etc. A big, busy day.

One evening the threshing rig pulled into our yard and set up ready to go in the morning. When we got up Mom was in bed and Aunt Ruth and Grandma Matz were in the kitchen and we had a new baby brother - Jim. I don't know how Aunt Ruth and Grandma got there since we had no telephones. Someone must have gone after them.

Since I was the oldest my job was to watch Vince and keep him out of the way. I wanted to ride in the grain wagon with Dad but he wouldn't let me as Vince was too small. Since Vince was what was stopping me from the ride, I tied him in the corner of the corn crib and had my ride.

Dad made a woven wire frame and had the straw blown on it to make a warm shelter for the livestock. There wasn't room in the barn. It was pitch dark in there, but was nice and warm for the winter.

At this time the folks decided they needed a car. The day the salesman came to teach them to drive Dad was in the harvest field so Mom learned to drive - a mistake for Dad never did learn to drive. The car was a Chevrolet with canvas side curtains to

keep out the rain and weather. One Sunday, Dad decided he'd learn to drive. To ride in the car was still a treat so we kids begged to go along. Dad was a soft touch and let us all go. He was used to the horses which stayed on the road while he looked over the country. Unfortunately, the car didn't do that and went into a

gentle ditch from which they could drive right out. Dad thought he could have hurt us all and never again tried to drive.

We kids slept upstairs in a room with a register in the floor. Christmas Eve we all sprawled out on the floor looking down the register hoping to see Santa but he failed us again. He left all our presents in a bushel basket in the barn and told Dad our chimney was too small for him to come down.

Marian and I got our first ma-ma dolls. I suppose because of the cold my doll didn't say ma-ma but Marian's did so I managed to talk her into trading. We got a puppy that year, I think from Grandma Matz. I left my doll on the floor and the puppy did his business on my doll. I tried to trade back with Marian but Mom wouldn't let me.

The boys got little iron animals hitched to carts. I got mad at Ted and threw the iron dog at him. Luckily my aim was bad and it missed him but broke a window - another spanking!

We were supposed to stay out of Mom's bedroom but Ted and I snooped and found some toy trucks. They never did appear as toys for us. My mother was a disciplinarian. She had told us to stay out. I never did know what happened to the trucks, but we never saw them again.

On May Day morning we found our first May baskets on the porch filled with violets and home made candy. Our neighbor girl, Lyla Dutton who was slightly older than we were, was responsible.

Dad had three beehives in the orchard, that we stayed away from. I don't remember Dad being stung, but in the fall he'd take the top flats off for our use, being sure to leave enough for the bees over winter.

Mom made Marian and me little coverall aprons to wear over our woolen winter dresses so they didn't have to be washed so often. The aprons were the same back and front, and tied at the side. They were made of black sateen and she appliqued little butterflies on the pockets, one blue and one pink. I don't remember which one was mine.

That fall it was time to move again, this time out by Goose Lake, a big house and barn and outbuildings. We had about fifty head of cattle. Dad didn't feed them the night before. He loaded a big load of hay on the hay rack and drove cross-country to our new place. The cattle followed the hay, but Ted and I had to keep them from going into the other farmers' fields - a long walk. I think it was about five miles, but eventually we put them in our own pasture.

They didn't get the household goods moved the same day we took the cows over to our new place, so we stayed a few days with Aunt Hilda. By now, I was beginning to be suspicious when I was

told to take the little kids away for the afternoon. So when we spent the afternoon up at Gray's, I wasn't really surprised to find a new baby, Polly, there when we got home.

The well was down a hill from the house. I was sent down there for a pail of drinking water. I filled the pail and started up the hill. Ted and Marion had laid up a supply of mud balls and climbed on top of the well house and amused themselves by throwing the mud balls into my pail of drinking water, so I had to empty it and go back for a clean pail full. They thought it was fun, but I failed to see the humor.

At this time there was a "State School" over in Owatonna, an orphanage, I believe. You could take some of the bigger kids to work for you for a small allowance until they were 18, when you had to give them a suit of clothes and \$100. Dad got a young man who stayed with us. His name was Sam. Sam knew I hated peppermints, so he often brought me peppermints when he went to town. Years later, after I left home he came to visit Dad.

Our driveway slanted up to join the highway. My dog Bob used to sit in the driveway and watch the cars go by. He didn't bark or chase them, just sat there. One of our neighbors, Dave Zimmerman, had a light Ford touring car. For some reason it annoyed him to see Bob in the driveway, so one day he swerved into the driveway to hit Bob. The sudden swerve tipped his car over. He wasn't hurt, and some men passing by tipped the car back. Bob disappeared that night and we never saw him again. I never felt sorry for his tipping his car over.

One evening a long line of pickup trucks with houses on the backs went by. The leader, a big heavy man, asked Dad for permission to camp in our yard. He had a pipe with a long curving stem, which rested on his belly. Dad didn't let them stay - our only experience with gypsies.

We belonged to a Farmers' Club which met at different houses about once a month. Whoever was entertaining next took home a sack with tin cups and big tin platters for lunch. It was called Four Corners Club and we had our own orchestra. Elnora or Dot played the piano, Joe Larson and George Fell played violins and Toot played the drums. If the house was big enough they danced - square dances. We kids usually had to learn a piece and sing some songs for the program.

That summer we all contracted whooping cough. Most of the kids had a mild case and spent the summer playing outside, but Polly and I coughed our heads off. Since I couldn't go out and play, I got to keep Polly from crying and coughing. She had eczema on her hands and face which itched badly and she would scratch until her face bled. Mom put little white stockings on her hands and arms to keep her from scratching so badly. We always said we never really knew what Polly looked like until she was three years old. The doctors didn't know what to do for her and they tried different medications and even treatments under an ultraviolet ray lamp but neither helped. We had our first telephone when we lived there and I believe electric lights - we were rich!! The phone was a party line and one of our enjoyments

was to "rubber" on the line when Mittelstead's ring came in, for our teacher, Miss Sheehan stayed there and she had a boyfriend. I was in seventh grade there.

Sometimes in bad winter weather Dad took us to school in the sleigh. He'd put hay in the bottom and we had heavy robes to cover us. He stood up in front dressed in his long horsehide overcoat and mittens. There was a cut in the road we had to go through and it drifted very badly. Sometimes he would go ahead of the horses and tramp down the snow to make it easier for them to get through. The snow was up to the horses' bellies and it was hard for them to keep their footing to get through.

In this school I met my first real girl friend, Mildred Halle, who was a grade ahead of me. One day a couple of years ago, Jim or Vince (I can't remember which) took me up that back road to find the school, but it was gone.

In this school we had our version of "hot lunches." We would bring food from home and put it on the heating stove at first recess and by noon it would be ready. We'd bring potatoes or something that could be heated - soup or stew, etc. One of our favorites we called "cackleberry pie" - heat stewed tomatoes to boiling and then break eggs into it, sort of poaching them in tomato juice. Doesn't sound good now, but it did then.

Dad got a contract with the Bird's Eye canning factory to grow sweet corn for them. So when the field man said the corn was ready to pick we were all out in the field going up and down the long rows of corn - pulling off the ears and throwing them in the wagon. When the wagon was full it was taken in to town and we were ready to start all over again.

One of the stores in town had a doll contest. I took Mom's "Fanny" doll and won the prize for the oldest doll. My prize was a "Bye-Lo-Baby" doll which in later years I gave to my girls to play with and it got broken. Today they are a collector's item and I wish I still had it.

One day while playing near the lake we found a 'huge' snapping turtle. His back was covered with moss and the number 1837 was carved in his shell. He was the biggest turtle I've ever seen.

At this time too, news came of the Lindberg baby kidnapping and we were given orders to come right home from school and not play along the way. Since we often walked down the highway, all the parents worried about us if we weren't home on time.

In our town, Saturday night was farmers' night out. They took their eggs and cream in to sell and bought groceries, but more importantly, they met their neighbors and friends and visited. One Saturday night two neighborhood girls went in to town leaving a younger brother and sister and father at home. When they came home they found the father and sister murdered and later found the brother murdered halfway to the next door neighbor's place. Apparently robbery was the motive because a safe kept in the house was gone and never found. Rumors were really flying but the murder was never solved. Later Aunt Hilda and Uncle Carl moved on to the place and because I was nervous

(O.K. scared) about it Aunt Hilda wanted me to stay a few nights and get over my nervousness. One night was enough and I never did get to feel easy visiting there.

Another move, this time back to the same place where Marian was born - the Breen place. We walked across the fields to school, four miles. The school was a modern one with a basement and separate coat halls for the boys and girls and indoor chemical toilets. Now there is a new house where the school stood. There was a well on the grounds and so we didn't have to carry water. One of our recess activities was drowning out pocket gophers. The farmers didn't like them as they tunnelled under the field crops and left big mounds of dirt. At one time there was a 5 cent bounty on them, but we never collected any of it. Other recess activities were "anti-anti over", pump pump pullaway, tag and kick the can.

I don't remember how many pupils were in the school but my eighth grade class consisted of me, Mildred Larson and Roy Jones. Vince had trouble pronouncing his R's. The Waseca Journal sent a reporter around to all the country schools to write a report on what they were doing. Vince was having reading class when she came and in her article she wrote about the little boy reading about the "Wee Wee Wabbit" which resulted in a lot of teasing for him.

Because so many kids quit school after the eighth grade or age 16, we had an eighth grade graduation in town and got diplomas. Aunt Sadie made over a dress for me. It was crepe with butterfly pleats in the skirt. They had visited us the summer before so she had my size, about the same as Stella's.

We had to pass "state exams" in order to pass eighth grade and go on to high school. I had to find a place to stay as there weren't school buses and driving in to town twice a day was quite a chore. I found a place to work for my room and board at a boarding house. Oh! the stacks of dishes every night after school. It was across town so was quite a walk to school.

Later I found a place right next to the schoolhouse but wasn't allowed to leave the house until after the 10 minute bell had rung. I was late a few times until I was called down to the office and told them why living next door to the school, I couldn't get there on time. This resulted in some hard feelings and I went to stay with Uncle Joe and Aunt Eva on the place Dad and Mom eventually bought. A two mile walk to the school now.

I don't think I even realized how poor we were until I went to high school. I determined that I was going to have it better but at that time there weren't too many job opportunities for women - waitressing, housework, cleaning and (better paying) nursing and teaching. I decided on teaching and worked toward further schooling all during high school.

Ted and I were old enough to help around the farm. We milked cows and during haying season we had two dump rakes. We got as much hay into the rakes as possible and "bucked" it up to the stack where Dad was pitching it up and Mom was stacking it.

When it got too high for Dad to pitch it up we loaded a hay rack and drove it up to the stack. Ted and I liked to race with our rakes to the stack. I had the slower team so Ted usually won.

Mom raised turkeys, geese and ducks and sold them dressed to the butcher shop in town at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Baby turkeys are cute but they grow up and ours liked to roam and roost in the neighbors' trees instead of our own at night. So each evening we had to find them and chase them home and then in the fall we had to help - very carefully- to pull the feathers off for they weren't worth as much if the skin was broken.

I remember waking up one night by someone pounding on the door and hearing a lot of snapping and crackling. Our next door neighbor's house was burning and they needed help to get things out while they could. We sat up and waited for Dad to come home. The house burned to the ground but the family was safe and unhurt and the men did get quite a few things out.

After that summer I wasn't home much anymore because I was in high school. One day when I came home from school Aunt Eva said we were going out to my house to see my new little brother - John. I knew John was coming but since we were three boys and three girls, I thought another girl would be nice, though I thought we needed lots of other things more than we needed a new baby. I guess I wasn't very nice about it, but Mom always said John was such a comfort to her as she got older and the rest of us kids left home, so God knows better than we do what is good for us.

I went out to the barn early that morning to start the milking and found three cows had got tangled up in their chains and strangled. Dad skinned them and sold the hides and had to add 10 cents to what he got for the hides to buy me a pair of shoes.

Farm prices were way down and by fall the crops weren't good enough to pay the rent so Dad decided to sell out and move to town - the place that was Grandma Erwin's, Mom's and Aunt Ruth's - not really in town but no farm. I wasn't home for the auction so missed the excitement.

After the move, Ted and I walked the two miles to high school. Since the littler kids still went to country school which was a four mile walk, if the weather was bad, Dad hitched up the horses and took the little kids to school while Ted and I walked.

This about covers my memories of my first 16 years of life. The next 65 or 70-some years are so full of things it is impossible to know where to start. They included going to teacher training, teaching a year, 52-1/2 years of marriage, living in many different places, three children, eleven grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren, 9-1/2 years of widowhood and finally this last year of lung cancer, surgery, stroke, radiation treatments and now chemotherapy - a year I'd just as soon forget, but I don't know what the Lord has in store for me yet.

RANDOM MEMORIES

One year we couldn't afford to buy a Christmas tree so Mom cut some branches from the spruce trees in the yard and tied them together. Not a beautiful tree, but not bad when trimmed. Our trees always had real candles for lights as we had no electricity. When it came time to light the candles we all had to sit down and stay put as long as the candles were lit because of the danger of fire.

We usually went to the church's Christmas Eve program where Santa put in an appearance, and we all got a sack of candy and an apple. While we were gone, Santa usually made a visit to our house. One night when we came home we found a big pan of sweet rolls on the table, a bundle of clothes (used) including flannel pajamas for the boys, games for all of us, dolls for the girls and I don't remember what else. We never knew for sure who was responsible but I'll never forget the kindness of the neighbors who did it.

Dad always liked to go to early Christmas morning service at the Catholic Church and as we kids got older we were allowed to go too, while the little kids stayed home with Grandma Erwin. After church, which was special, there was a beautiful creche in the front of the church and the choir of nuns singing in Latin from the balcony. Then there was dinner to get; Uncle Carl and Aunt Hilda usually had their holiday dinners, Thanksgiving and Christmas, with us. There was something special about getting up early and the sleigh ride into town in the cold for the church service so different from ours.

We ran barefoot all summer and got a new pair of shoes when school started in the fall. I found a pair I really liked. I knew they were too small but I wanted them so badly I said they fit. So all that fall I walked to school in shoes that pinched my feet. I didn't dare tell them the shoes were too tight because I knew they couldn't afford to buy a new pair for me. Finally I couldn't stand it any longer and had to own up.

For several Christmases Marian and I got "bloomer dresses" from Grandma Matz for Christmas. Aunt Marie made them and we were thrilled with them, for they were very stylish.

Dad had a nice untrained singing voice. Too bad I didn't inherit it! We had a big old rocking chair and after supper he'd take two of the littlest kids on his lap and sing to them - songs he made up about things around the farm - the new little calf, etc.

I spent quite a bit of time during the summer with my cousin Lucille. She was an only child and got lonesome. I loved going there because she had the most toys to play with - things we never had at home.

About this time Grandma Erwin decided I was old enough to learn to sew. For the boys, using old suits, she made little suits with short pants that buttoned on to a waist - about a dozen buttonholes, which Grandma thought was a good starting point for me. She made beautiful buttonholes. I never did get mine as perfect as hers, but they were good enough so she passed them.

Sometimes Aunt Ruth would come to stay with us a few days and invariably she would decide she should wash our heads. She really put enthusiasm into the job and how we hated it! Our heads would be sore for some time afterwards.

Part of the time we had a car, always an old one and not very good. We had no garage and on really cold mornings it often wouldn't start, so Dad would hitch up the team and pull it down the road. Sometimes the engine would give a few pops and Dad would think it had started. Mom couldn't keep it going and Dad would get mad. He knew nothing about cars so didn't understand it hadn't really started. Eventually it would start and everything was O.K.

When we didn't have the car we had a surrey. It didn't have a fringe on top, but it did have a top. One Fourth of July somebody convinced Dad to drive it in the parade. Of course us kids wouldn't be left behind so all seven of us and Mom and Dad drove in the parade. Afterward we found somebody had tied tin cans on the back and put a big sign "Just Married" on the buggy, which probably accounted for the applause we got. Mom was very embarrassed.

Mom had varicose veins which the doctor told her could break and she should get in to the doctor immediately, so she taught me how to drive as we now had no phone and Dad didn't drive. I drove around the farm and one memorable Sunday I drove the back roads to Aunt Ruth's in Janesville. One summer while staying in St. Peter with Grandma, Melvin and Walford taught me to drive their Model T with three pedals on the floor, so I could bring lunch out to the field to them.

During my last year in high school I baby sat quite a bit for Dad's cousin Gen Ingram and her two kids. Toward spring we all contracted the measles and it was decided that I should stay in town so the kids at home didn't get them. It didn't work out that way and Vince especially had a lot of trouble with his ears

as a result - so did I! One night I got up to go to the bathroom. I woke up lying on the bedroom floor. I don't know if I fainted or just blacked out. I never told anyone - I was kind of ashamed.

Also, just before exams the kids at home got the mumps. I was afraid I'd get them and couldn't take my final exams, so I stayed a couple of weeks with Grandma Matz. I can't remember how I got to school from there unless I borrowed one of the boys' bikes. I did get the mumps but pulled the collar of my blouse up over my neck so no one would see the swelling and went to school and wrote my exams. I sure didn't feel good that day, and now I wonder how many folks came down with the mumps because of me. Anyway, I passed the state exams and was eligible to graduate.

Mom was raised in Bridgeport, Connecticut and she said that every year one of the big circuses (it may have been Ringling Bros.) began their summer circuit there, so she had a fascination for the circus. When a small circus came to our town she always took us in to see the parade. We never could afford to see the performance but Oh! the parade! First the horse-drawn calliope playing rousing tunes, all decorated in shiny bright colors. Then the wagons with the animal cages, also brightly decorated and drawn by horses with big white plumes on their heads and shiny harnesses, and the animals - lions, tigers and monkeys. After them came the trained ponies, also with plumes and pulling little two-wheeled carts with the trained dogs sitting in them. Of course the clowns were all around, and the performers in their spangly, scanty, bright outfits and last of all the elephants. And the big tent set up on a vacant lot - we never got inside. To this day, I get a kick out of a circus, especially the trapeze and high wire acts.

Not nearly so exciting but quite lasting, Dad went to a neighbor's auction sale and came home with a big linen tablecloth which probably was burned when the house burned. And best of all a wind-up phonograph with quite a few records which we kids really enjoyed, as did the grandchildren. Marian has the phonograph now.

As I think back over what I have written, I realize that I probably should have mentioned the summers Marian and I spent with Grandma Erwin in St. Peter - helping her.

Grandma had two bachelor nephews, Melvin and Walford Rydeen, who were sons of her sister Annie. They farmed on the place homesteaded by their grandfather, Carl Sandberg. I have some letters written in Swedish that if I could get them translated, might throw some light on why he left Sweden and about siblings he maybe left behind him. I do not know just when the name change came about, but I have a little diary written by him in Sweden in which he identifies himself as Karl Johannsson (Johnson) but in America he was Carl Sandburg. Maybe the change came at the Immigration Center?

I do know that he landed in New York, was there for a short time and then went to Chicago and later to St. Peter, Minnesota. He homesteaded a place on the shores of Timber Lake. After working the place he sent back to Sweden for his sweetheart Caroline Jonesdotter, who followed him to Minnesota and they were married three days later. The record is in the courthouse in St. Peter as is the record of their naturalization.

Grandma told me that they lived in a very small building while building the log house. It was later used as a chicken coop. The house was a two-room, two-storied one. It was still there when Marian and I stayed there, although it had had two additions - one a kitchen and the other bedrooms for Melvin and Walford.

In the loft over the bedrooms, Grandma would sometimes let me go up there and explore. There was a spinning wheel which I loved and which Grandma promised I could have when I had a home of my own. After many years I did get the spinning wheel and it is one of my prized possessions. There was also a baby cradle with a canopy overhead all carved from a log, a yoke for over the shoulders for carrying water, part of an oxen cart wheel made of wood, and a loom. Also downstairs was an old wind-up phonograph that played cylindrical records. One of my favorites was "Silver Bells" - no relation to the modern song of that name. Also there was a big old desk which had some 'secret' drawers in it. The floor was covered by hand-woven rag rugs made on the loom upstairs. I have a red and white coverlet made on that loom and Marian has a coverlet with the red and white center and a dark green border on it.

When Melvin and Walford sold the farm they took the old things with them to their new home in North Branch where I picked up my spinning wheel. When they were in Waseca for my mother's funeral they told me if I would stop on our way home I could have the spinning wheel. We stopped and had a most enjoyable time. They took us to meet the children of their sister, Martha Magnusson. (I remembered Martha from staying with Grandma.) I got my spinning wheel at that time, and I believe the other things were given to the historical society at North Branch.

Timber lake was a shallow lake and years later was drained and made good farm land. One day when Sue and I were looking for Grandma Erwin's grave we came up over a hill and suddenly everything was familiar. I told Sue that just down that driveway was the homestead. As we drove down there I recognized the barn, etc. but not the house. The lady living there (I didn't know until then that the place had been sold) asked us in and told us about dozing down the old log house to build the new one and showed us pictures. She said the log house was so sturdily built that it was hard to get it down.

Melvin and Walford farmed the homestead with their brother George who owned the adjoining farm. They all three loved to tease us - especially Melvin - and would talk in Swedish to Grandma, knowing that we didn't understand them.

It was during one of these summers that I learned to drive the car. I also got to know their sisters who lived in the neighborhood - Edna Ross, Martha Magnusson, Vera Erwin as well as Grandma's sister Aunt Emma Dahlberg and her sons Clarence and her husband John who Grandma called Leander.

Grandma and I went over to help Aunt Emma cook for the thrashers and some way I found myself making apple pies for all these men and they were good! Clarence was still a bachelor at that time though he later married. I never knew Aunt Annie though I do have some sad memories. I knew she was very ill and was in the hospital in Rochester where she died. I don't know if it was a railroad ruling or just custom, but when they sent her to St. Peter for burial a family member had to be with her, so Grandma got ready and caught the train when it stopped in Waseca. Sue and I couldn't find a death certificate for her until I realized it would be in Olmstead County where she died.

Grandma always spoke English to us, but I remember her in her later years sitting in her rocker and reading her Swedish bible. She said her prayers in Swedish too. It was the language she was confirmed in.

Education was important to them. In Grandma's papers I found a copy of a deed giving a parcel of land for a school to go back to the farm when it was no longer used as a school. Also lists of donations to Gustavus Adolphus College.

Grandma used to tell stories of the "olden days." I wish now I had paid more attention to them. One that really impressed me was, it had been a cold hard winter and the animals were starving. The family had been to town (Traverse-de-Sioux). It was early evening as they were coming home through the woods, when they noticed a wolf following them. Soon there were more wolves, getting bolder and seeming to want to attack the horses. Her father drove the wolves back with his whip and whippped the horses to their best speed, and so came out of the woods into the barnyard and safety.

Another of Grandma's stories regarded a big snow storm. She said her father knew a bad storm was coming - he could hear it coming. So they carried tubs of water into the barn for the livestock and filled their mangers with hay and extra feed. Then they carried stacks of wood into the house. During the night the storm hit and by morning they couldn't even see the outbuildings. They didn't go outside for three days. They opened the door enough to get shovelful of snow to melt for water. Many lives were lost because folks couldn't see where they were and became lost, often within a few feet of their houses. When the storm was over, the drifts were as high as the second story windows and packed very hard because of the high wind. They went out the upstairs windows and slid down to the barn. They had to tunnel to get into the barn but all the livestock were O.K., as were the family. I have experienced similar storms when we lived in South Dakota.